

# STEVENS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

## STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2023–2025



**Submitted by:**  
**Jess Mynes**  
**Library Director**  
**(978) 827-4115**  
**[library@ashburnham-ma.gov](mailto:library@ashburnham-ma.gov)**

*Stevens Memorial Library, 20 Memorial Drive, Ashburnham, MA, 01430*

# Stevens Memorial Library

## Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2023–2025

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
COMMUNITY OVERVIEW .....	3
<b>OUR PLANNING PROCESS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>KEY LEARNINGS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THE PLAN .....</b>	<b>4</b>
VISION STATEMENT.....	4
MISSION STATEMENT .....	4
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND OBJECTIVES .....	5
ANNUAL ACTION PLANS.....	6
COMMUNICATING PROGRESS.....	6
<b>TRUSTEES’ PLAN APPROVAL.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>LOOKING FORWARD .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>7</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The Stevens Memorial Library serves a community of more than 6,000 people in Ashburnham, MA. We strive to be a community anchor that is accountable to the community's needs. With this in mind, we developed a strategic plan to guide us through fiscal years 2023-2025.

A strategic plan improves community engagement and operational excellence while promoting transparency and accountability. The Plan helps us define our vision for future directions and align our actions with our aspirations while creating a shared understanding between the Library and the Ashburnham community about the future.

By listening to our stakeholders, we can understand the Library's strengths and challenges and create a realistic but aspirational road map to achieve future objectives. This Plan is flexible; it allows us to adapt to evolving environments by identifying our successes and determining how best to meet our challenges. It enables us to track progress and prioritize how we will meet the needs of our diverse stakeholders.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Community Overview

An overview of the Ashburnham community is included as an appendix to this Strategic Plan (see *Appendix A—Ashburnham Overview*).

## OUR PLANNING PROCESS

The Library started its strategic planning process in October 2020. We hired Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting Services to facilitate a series of planning exercises, oversee the collection and analysis of internal and community feedback, and assist with drafting the document.

To assess our current state and envision our future through an inclusive, transparent process, we identified specific activities and engaged key community stakeholders in the process of gathering information for the Plan's creation.

The series of community feedback exercises included:

- 1 Community Visioning Exercise (10)
- 2 Strengths-Opportunities-Aspirations-Results (SOAR) Exercises:
  - Staff (5)
  - Board of Trustees and Friends of the Library Board members (11)
- 3 Focus Groups:
  - Teens (6)
  - Facilities & Technology (5)
  - Library Programs (5)
- 2 Surveys:

- Community Survey (322 responses)
- Youth Services Survey (31 responses)

The planning process underwent a temporary hiatus from May-October 2021 due to Covid-19 and leadership changes. A detailed process flowchart is attached as *Appendix B—Strategic Planning Project Process Flowchart for 2020-22*.

## KEY LEARNINGS

The feedback from the community members provided insight into their perceptions of the Library and its potential future. Their input contributed to the Strategic Plan.

Areas of Focus included the following:

- **Collection Development:** Grow and Diversify Collections
- **Facilities:** Add Rooms and Niches, Improve Exterior Space, Upgrade Interior, Enhance Teen Space, Improve Accessibility, Update Displays and Signage
- **Operations and Management:** Increase Teen Participation
- **Marketing/Outreach:** Use New and Improved Communication Channels, Improve and Increase Messaging, Enhance Outreach Activities
- **Programming:** Adult Program Ideas, Tweens and Teen Program Ideas, Children’s Program Ideas
- **Services:** Home Delivery, Teen Services, Books Sales
- **Technology:** Increase Technology Instruction and Support, Grow Technology Collections

## THE PLAN

### Vision Statement

Stevens Memorial Library is a community leader that illuminates a path for everyone to explore, create, and connect.

### Mission Statement

Stevens Memorial Library is a welcoming community center that enriches the well-being of our community.

❖ Personalized Service ❖ Inclusive Community Connection ❖ Discovery & Lifelong Learning

## Strategic Directions and Objectives

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: Establish the Library as a lifelong learning leader in developing the community's reading, information, digital, food, and cultural literacy skills.**

- 1.1 Create reading, information, and food literacy programming for all populations and learning styles.
- 1.2 Cultivate a collection that supports the cultural, intellectual, academic, and recreational needs of our community.
- 1.3 Provide professional development for the Library team that supports the technical literacy needs and interests of the community.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: Increase the community's awareness of the value of Library resources and services.**

- 2.1 Create a Communication Plan for the Library.
- 2.2 Increase the Library's visibility in the Town of Ashburnham.
- 2.3 Improve the Library website's functionality.
- 2.4 Develop a process to collect and respond to feedback from Library stakeholders.
- 2.5 Foster a collaborative working environment for staff.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3: Foster recognition of the Library as an essential community leader and collaborator.**

- 3.1 Create a welcoming learning environment that fosters usage of Library space and services.
- 3.2 Develop partnerships and collaborations with other Town Departments, local schools, businesses, organizations, and community stakeholders.
- 3.3 Enhance support of and collaboration with The Friends of the Stevens Memorial Library.
- 3.4 Leverage the knowledge and expertise of local organizations, libraries, consortia, and individuals to strengthen Library programming and services.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: Continuously assess and update Library services, facilities, resources, and team members to provide transformative Library experiences and enhance users' lives.**

- 4.1 Increase accessibility to Library programming, initiatives, and services by expanding the Library's presence in the community.

- 4.2 Reach new and underserved populations at their point of need.
- 4.3 Create a Library culture of regular assessment and evaluation of Library services and initiatives.
- 4.4 Develop a learning environment that complements the use of Library services and resources.

## Annual Action Plans

Each year, the Library develops an Action Plan for the following fiscal year. This Plan identifies new initiatives and projects but does not include ongoing operational responsibilities.

The Action Plan is a living document. It reflects a tactical approach to directions and activities that have been identified as priorities, while it allows for flexibility to integrate new needs and priorities as they arise. Action Plans will be updated annually.

## Communicating Progress

The library director will review progress toward achieving the Strategic Plan’s directions, objectives, and activities quarterly. The director will communicate the progress to the team and the trustees at monthly meetings. The director will also report on performance highlights from the calendar year to the community.

The Strategic Plan, including its appendices, is available on the Library’s website.

## TRUSTEES’ PLAN APPROVAL

This Strategic Plan was approved unanimously by the Board of Trustees at their June 17, 2022 meeting.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Molly Ruble, Chair
- Edward T. Vitone, Jr., Vice Chair and Secretary
- Paula St. Laurent-Kuehl, Treasurer
- Anne Olivari
- JoAnn Piedrafite
- Katie Stevens

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate the time and effort that everyone contributed to the Strategic Plan. The Plan would not have been completed without contributions from the community, the Library team, the Board of Trustees, and The Friends of the Library.

## LOOKING FORWARD

This Strategic Plan is a living document. The challenges we face, and the community’s needs will continue to evolve. We’ve created a Plan that reflects thoughtful awareness of our challenges while providing us with a road map to meet those challenges. We will continue to practice a thoughtful approach and update our road map as needed. We are committed to proactively identifying and meeting the community’s needs.

## APPENDICES

**[Appendix A—Ashburnham Overview:](#)** This fact sheet presents key demographic information about the Ashburnham community.

**[Appendix B—Stevens Memorial Library Strategic Planning Project Process Flowchart for 2020-22:](#)** The flowchart illustrates the Library’s planning methodology, including the timeline, assessment mechanisms, and process participants.

**[Appendix C—Stevens Memorial Library Community Survey Results Report 2020:](#)** The online community survey was conducted in 2020. The data is presented in summary tables and charts.

**[Appendix D—Stevens Memorial Library Community Ideas and Feedback Report 2021:](#)** This report presents an itemized list of ideas and miscellaneous feedback collected throughout the strategic planning process. It summarizes and prioritizes the input received based on each item’s relative significance.

**[Appendix E—Stevens Memorial Library SOAR Exercise Summary Results 2020:](#)** This report documents the results of an environmental assessment of the Library’s strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.

**[Appendix F—Stevens Memorial Library Focus Groups Summary Report 2021:](#)** This report presents feedback and ideas generated by teens and adult focus group participants about the Library’s collections, facility, programs, services, technology, and staff.

**[Appendix G—Stevens Memorial Library Teen/Young Adult Survey Results Report 2020:](#)** The hardcopy teen/young adult survey was conducted in 2020. The results are summarized in graphs and charts.

**[Appendix H—Stevens Memorial Library Community Vision Statements 2021:](#)** This report presents the top five community vision statements developed by community members during the planning process.

**This week at SML**  
May 16–21, 2022

**Monday, May 16**  
Library open 10am–4pm

**Tuesday, May 17**  
Library open 10am–4pm  
Garden Storytime 11am  
Library Trustees meeting 4pm

**Wednesday, May 18**  
Library open 10am–8pm  
Monthly Senior Social Hour 12–1pm  
Teen Bullet Journal Book Club 3–4pm  
Friends of the Library meeting 4pm  
Patriotic Table Runner Workshop 6pm  
Poetry Reading 6:30–8pm, contact library for Zoom link

**Thursday, May 19**  
Library open 10am–4pm  
Garden Storytime 11am

**Saturday, May 21**  
Library open 10am–2pm

Ashburnham Stevens Memorial Library  
20 Memorial Drive, Ashburnham MA 01430 | 978-827-4115 | ashburnhamlibrary.org